

Orchard Park Central School District

2240 Southwestern Blvd. West Seneca, NY 14224

David Lilleck
Superintendent



www.opschools.org
(716)209-6200

Junior Class College & Career Selection

The college selection process can be overwhelming. Listed below are suggestions and procedures that will help guide you. Please make an appointment to see your counselor as often as necessary to answer all your questions.

1. The School Counseling Department recently facilitated an assembly for the entire junior class. The assembly consisted of a review of graduation requirements and an introduction to the college process. As a follow-up, we will be meeting individually with each junior to go over course selections for their senior year and to discuss their specific postsecondary plans in more detail. We will discuss the OP application process.
2. No recommendation letters will be written without completed Brag Sheets (teachers and counselors). If a recommendation is needed from a faculty member, be considerate. Do not make a request a day before the deadline. Be sure to allow several weeks for them to write a letter for you, and provide your Brag Sheets. A stamped, addressed envelope should be included with your request if needed. If you are using the Common Application, you need to invite your recommender directly to your application.
3. If a School Counselor recommendation is required, advise your School Counselor. Do not assume that one will be written automatically. A minimum of two weeks' notice is required, and the required **Student AND Parent Brag Sheets** need to be completed and submitted before requesting a letter of recommendation - as indicated on the Transcript Request Form (TRF).
4. Applications for most schools may be obtained online through the college's website or by using the **Common Application** at <https://ophs.opschools.org/school-counseling/common-application>. Students applying to **only** SUNY colleges and universities may wish to use the **SUNY Application** at <https://ophs.opschools.org/school-counseling/suny-application>.
5. Anytime you are asked to enter an email address (college application, ACT/SAT/AP registration, scholarship application, financial aid forms, etc.) be sure to use a personal email address that you regularly monitor. If you use your OPHS student email address, the spam filters may prevent you from receiving important information.
6. When requesting information from schools, make sure to ask about the financial aid process. You are required to complete a **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. **As of the 2024-2025 school year, the completion of the FAFSA is REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION.** The FAFSA produces a Student Aid Report, which indicates your eligibility for grants, loans and work-study. It may also be used to determine your eligibility for institutional scholarships. Some schools also reference the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. Be sure to submit this financial aid form by going to <http://css.collegeboard.org> if it is required for any of the schools in which you

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are applying. Please be aware that a thorough introduction to the financial aid process will be given at our Financial Aid Night on May 7th at 7:00 PM.

7. Regardless of whether you apply online or on paper, you must complete a Transcript Request Form (TRF) available at <https://ophs.opschools.org/school-counseling/transcripts> or in the House Offices. No transcript leaves the office without having a TRF on file. An electronic request or email does not replace the TRF. The TRF must be completed for all transcripts, including NCAA and scholarships. Please allow at least two (2) weeks before any deadline for processing. When all information requested is complete, the transcript will be mailed or submitted electronically. **Please note the following application deadlines and when the TRF needs to be turned in to your school counselor:**

- **11/1/26 college deadline. Turned in to Counselor by 10/16/26**
- **11/15/26 college deadline. Turned in to Counselor by 10/30/26**
- **12/1/26 college deadline. Turned in to Counselor by 11/16/26**
- **1/1/27 college deadline: Turned in to Counselor by 12/11/26**
- **1/15/27 college deadline. Turned in to Counselor by 12/14/26**

8. Keep track of dates and deadlines for tests, college interviews, and applications. Please note transcripts do not include SAT/ACT/AP scores. This means they must be sent directly from the SAT or ACT.

9. If you plan to apply to college, be realistic about your choices. Do not underestimate or overestimate your abilities. Don't be afraid to consider competitive schools, but also have a 'safe' school among your choices. If you are not considering college, trade school, or military service, it offers educational as well as career opportunities. If you are considering the military, you should make an appointment with a recruiter and take the ASVAB (Military Entrance Exam). Students who are not interested in college should explore employment opportunities. Check the job board in the cafeteria for further information.

10. Copies of scholarship notifications should be given to Mr. Behm or Mrs. Stahl in House 1 for inclusion in the graduation program **by June 1st – NO EXCEPTIONS!** Only outside scholarships and specific colleges will be listed. No amounts or specific awards from schools will be announced. Check scholarship listings at <https://ophs.opschools.org/school-counseling/scholarships>.

12. Encourage your parents to share in the college search process and your final decision. Speak with friends, family, and faculty about schools. You have a natural resource in these contacts. Consider your talents (music, athletics, art, theater, etc.). Look for schools with strong programs in these areas, as well as the major in which you are interested.

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13. DEMONSTRATED INTEREST is the degree to which you show a college you are sincerely interested in attending their institution. Your demonstrated interest is taken into consideration when admissions decisions are made. Examples of how you may demonstrate your interest include completing a campus visit or meeting with a college representative. For OPHS information on meeting with college representatives, log into your SCOIR account or visit <https://ophs.opschools.org/school-counseling/college-visitations>.

14. Check with colleges for special campus visitation programs and interviews, and remember to send a thank-you note after an interview. It helps the person to make a connection between the name, face, and application.

15. Whenever possible, spend time on the campus of schools to which you are applying: individual or group tour, open house, campus sporting event, etc. Would you ever consider buying a car without test-driving it first?!

16. After you have been accepted and made your choice, be sure to let the other colleges know that you will not be attending. Many schools have waiting lists. Be considerate of others.

17. Keep your School Counselor informed about decisions you receive from colleges and also any changes in your plans as the year progresses. We are interested and want this to be a productive year for you.

18. If you are a male, you must register with the Selective Service within 30 days of your 18th birthday. It is the law. If you do not register, you will not qualify for Federal College loans and grants, student aid in most states, employment training or federal and many state jobs. Register online at www.sss.gov.

19. If you want to play college sports, be sure to register with the NCAA. You can obtain information at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>. Please be aware that Drama, American Cultural & Media Studies, Sports Literature, and Fundamentals of Algebra do not meet NCAA compliance requirements. You can check the school's 48H for further information. This is your responsibility for eligibility.

20. Check the School Counseling webpage regularly. Documents referenced above and much more can be found there at <https://ophs.opschools.org/school-counseling>.

Good luck and remember to enjoy the experience - we're here to help!

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